

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA
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AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMCONSUL MADRAS
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 9789

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN
SUBJECT: GOI ATTITUDES TOWARD PAK DEVELOPMENTS

1. THE JANATA GOVERNMENT'S CAUTIOUS AND CORRECT PUBLIC
ATTITUDE TOWARD THE MILITARY TAKEOVER IN PAKISTAN ACCORDS
WITH ITS DECLARED POLICY THAT INDIA'S FIRST PRIORITY IS TO
PROMOTE COOPERATION AND TRUST WITH HER IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS,
AND THAT SHE RECOGNIZES THEIR RIGHT (TO QUOTE FOREIGN MINISTER
VAJPAYEE) "TO DETERMINE THEIR SEPARATE NATIONAL FULFILL-
MENT" AND WOULD POSE NO THREAT TO THEIR NATIONAL PERSONALI-
TIES. IT ALSO STEMS FROM A RECOGNITION ON THE GOI'S PART
THAT ANY COMMENT IT MIGHT MAKE WOULD IN TIME-HONORED FASHION
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BE MISUNDERSTOOD AND DISTORTED IN PAKISTAN, WITH INDO-PAK
RELATIONS THE LOSER. WE ANTICIPATE THAT THE GOI WILL HEW TO
THIS PUBLIC LINE THROUGHOUT PAKISTAN'S POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES,
UNLESS THERE IS SEVERE PROVOCATION. WITH THE UNPREDICTABLE
BHUTTO OUT OF OFFICE AND NO LONGER IN CONTROL OF THE GOP
MEDIA, SUCH PROVOCATION -- POSSIBLY IN THE FORM OF ANTI-
INDIAN CAMPAIGN OF THE SORT SOME GOI REPRESENTATIVES HAVE

FEARED -- SEEMS LESS LIKELY FROM THIS DELHI VANTAGE POINT.

2. AS REPORTED IN NEW DELHI 9695, A RESPONSIBLE MEA OFFICIAL HAS REITERATED TO US THE FAMILIAR THEME THAT WHAT THE GOI MOST WANTS IN PAKISTAN IS STABILITY. WE TEND TO ACCEPT THIS, THOUGH WITH SOME OBVIOUS RESERVATIONS. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PRESENT GOI SHARES WITH THE USG THE ASSESSMENT THAT THE STABILITY OF PAKISTAN IS IMPORTANT FOR THE STABILITY OF THE SUBCONTINENT, A STATE OF AFFAIRS WE THINK THE INDIANS ALSO FAVOR. AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOI WOULD OBVIOUSLY NOT WANT TO SEE A REGIME IN ISLAMABAD, HOWEVER, STABLE, WHICH WAS NOT COMMITTED TO THE NORMALIZATION OF INDO-PAK RELATIONS. BUT WE SUSPECT THAT THE INDIANS BELIEVE THAT IT IS A STABLE REGIME ACROSS THE BORDER WHICH WOULD BE MOST LIKELY TO MAINTAIN THE GOP'S ADHERENCE TO THE SIMLARAGREEMENT AND ITS ACHIEVEMENTS. IN THE PROBABLE INDIAN VIEW, A WEAK PAK GOVERNMENT THREATENED BY DOMESTIC OPPONENTS WOULD BE PRONE TO SEEK RELIEF IN ANTI-INDIAN POSTURES AND ACTIVITIES.

3. WE ALSO TAKE AT FACE VALUE THE MEA OFFICIAL'S ASSERTION THAT AS A COUNTRY WHICH HAS JUST RESTORED ITS OWN DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES, INDIA WOULD PREFER TO SEE A DEMOCRATIC REGIME IN PAKISTAN. THIS IS A NATURAL STANCE FOR THE GOI IN THESE IMMEDIATE POST-EMERGENCY MONTHS AND INDIA'S EXPERIENCE WITH PAST PAK MILITARY REGIMES AND RULERS DOES NOTHING TO COUNTER IT. AT THE SAME TIME, THERE IS A TENDENCY HERE TO REGARD
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PERIODIC MILITARY COUPS IN PAKISTAN AS INEVITABLE GIVEN THE NATURE OF THE COUNTRY. NEITHER MEA, THE INDIAN DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT, NOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC HERE SEEMS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED BY THE IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIAN SECURITY OF THE MILITARY TAKEOVER. THIS MAY REFLECT AN AWARENESS HERE THAT THE PAK MILITARY, HOWEVER MUCH IT MAY STILL SMART FROM ITS 1971 DEFEAT, IS NOT ABLE TO POSE A SERIOUS THREAT TO INDIA AND, THOUGH NO LONGER CONTROLLED BY CIVILIAN AUTHORITY, IS UNLIKELY TO TRY ANOTHER ROUND.

4. WE WOULD GUESS THAT DESPITE ITS PROFESSED FAMILIARITY WITH PAKISTAN, THE GOI IS NO MORE CERTAIN THAN OTHER OBSERVERS ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN THERE. IT IS CERTAINLY NOT VOLUNTEERING ANY FORECASTS. WE WOULD THINK THAT THE GOI SHARES THE WIDE-SPREAD DOUBTS ABOUT THE PNA'S CONTINUING VIABILITY, AND IN THE CONTEXT OF ITS INTEREST IN A STABLE PAKISTAN IS CONCERNED BY THIS. IF IT HAS ANY FAVORITES, IT IS KEEPING MUM. WE WOULD DOUBT THAT THE MULLAHS OF THE JAMAATS, WITH THEIR ISLAMIC COMMITMENT AND THEIR QUESTIONABLE ABILITY TO GOVERN, WOULD BE AMONG THEM. WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF THE INDIANS DECIDED TO PROVIDE COVER ASSISTANCE TO ANY OF THE CONTENDERS.

5. AS THEY SURVEY THE CONFUSED PAK POLITICAL SCENE, THE INDIANS PROBABLY LOOK BACK WITH NOSTALGIA TO THE PRE-JANUARY DAYS WHEN BHUTTO, FOR ALL HIS POSTURING, HEADED A SEEMINGLY STRONG AND STABLE REGIME WITH WHOM THE GOI COULD EFFECTIVELY DEAL. THE INDIANS PROBABLY RECOGNIZE THAT SUCH A HAPPY STATE OF AFFAIRS IS NOT LIKELY TO BE EASILY RESTORED.
GOHEEN

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